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" Our right and natural road
is towards the summits "

SRI AUROBINDO

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The Advent

Dhyana means to make the mind and vital quiet and concentrate in aspiration for the Mother's Peace, the Mother's Presence, her Light, Force and Ananda.

Sri Aurobindo

The ADVENT

August, 1958

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You cannot expect
anybody to be perfect
unless you are perfect
yourself. And to be
perfect means to be
exactly as the Lord wants
you to be

3-6-58

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THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

The Human Destiny

A MENTAL being alone can be interested in the process of transformation and creation. In the animal the mental consciousness was not sufficient enough to take interest in the evolutionary process.

The animal had no means to note what was happening, to take it into account and remember it. That is why this part of earth's history has, so to say, disappeared. A mental capacity like that of man was needed to intervene so that the course of the transformation might be followed and its memory kept. Indeed, more has been imagined on the point than remembered. The psychic being has, of course, passed through all that, but it has

* Based on The Mother's Talks

no mental memory of them. The memory of the psychic being is a psychic memory and it has a different character. It has not like the mind a historical character which enables it to keep an exact account of all that happens.

But now that we are on the threshold of a new transformation, a new emergence, as Sri Aurobindo says, and we are about to take part in the process of the transformation between the mental and the supramental being, we shall get the benefit of this historic capacity of the mind which will be able to follow what happens and take note of it. Therefore from this point also the phenomenon that is happening now is absolutely unique in the history of the earth. And probably, why probably, almost certainly, when we shall have followed the process of transformation to the very end, we shall possess the key to all preceding transformations. In other words, all that we try to understand now, we shall know as it ought to be known, when the process is reproduced, this time between the mental and the supramental being.

You are invited specially to develop your faculty of observation so that nothing may happen in a kind of half-dream and you may not wake up without even your knowing how things have come about.

You must be entirely vigilant, entirely awake and instead of taking interest in the small inner psychological phenomena, which are by now a very old game, at any rate, which belong to the old-world human history, it would be better to pay more attention to things that are more general, more subtle and more impersonal, that put you in front of new discoveries of a highly interesting kind.

Open the eyes of subtle intelligence and without prejudice or preference, without egoism and attachment, look at the thing that is in the process of Happening.

12-3-1958

INTERPRETATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

(1)

"And the hours vanish like dreams unlived..."

(*Prayers and Meditations* of the Mother)

IT is an experience. I have not taken the word "dream" in the sense of the dreams that we have in sleep. I have taken it in the sense of something that has been built in the best and the most clear-seeing part of the being, something which is an ideal and which one would like to see realised, something which is the highest, the noblest, the most beautiful, the most wonderful of all things ever created. There is a power of imagination and creation somewhere in the consciousness, and you build there first so that what you build may be realised.

But for some reason or other, the thing is not realised. Either the world is not ready or perhaps the formation was not sufficiently strong, anyhow the thing is not realised. Then the hours pass...barren, unproductive, useless, vain, empty. They seem to vanish, because they do not bring any result, they are of no utility.

(2)

"...beauty restored to its priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal". (*The Synthesis of Yoga*—Sri Aurobindo)

In the physical world, of all things it is beauty that best expresses the Divine. The physical world is the world of forms and the perfection of the form is beauty. If we admit this, namely, in the physical world beauty is the best and the nearest expression of the Divine, then it becomes quite natural to speak of it as a priestess who interprets, expresses, manifests the Eternal. Its role is precisely to put the entire manifested Nature in contact

with the Eternal through the perfection of the form, through harmony and a sense of the ideal that uplifts you towards something higher. So the word priesthood seems quite apt and answers to the question.

11-7-1956

(3)

"An integrally spiritual consciousness"

There is a part of the being which is not satisfied with abstractions, not satisfied with escaping and evading life, leaving it as it is. It is the part of the being which wants to be integral, which wants to participate integrally in the inner adoration.

There is, in every normal being, a necessity, an absolute need to translate physically what he feels and wants within. People who want to run away from life in order to realise themselves, I consider abnormal and incomplete, and generally they are found to be weak by nature. But people with power and force and a sort of healthy equilibrium in them always feel the necessity of translating materially their spiritual realisation; they are not satisfied with merely going into the clouds, into the worlds where there is no form. They need that their physical consciousness and even their body should participate in their inner experience.

The will to translate one's inner aspiration and adoration into the forms of one's physical life is quite justifiable. You become much more sincere in this way than by cutting yourself into two and, whenever you can, whenever you have time or whenever it pleases you, withdrawing into yourself, escaping from life and the physical consciousness, going more or less far up some heights to find spiritual joys, telling yourself that the external life has no importance, will never change, must be accepted as it is and that it is only the inner attitude that counts.

1-8-1956

(4)

"A Desire-Soul"

The desire-soul is that which enables you to live, to act, to move. It is that which gives life to the body. Without it, you would be dead matter, like a stone or if not altogether inert then like the plant, vegetative.

There are people who say that without desire, that is to say, without this desire-soul, there would be no progress. True, in ordinary life it is a useful thing, but when you want to do Yoga, to find the Divine, it becomes somewhat of a burden.

This false soul, the desire-soul is all the more strong when the individuality is strongly formed. People who have an individuality that is well-formed, well-coordinated, existing by itself, with a minimum of dependence upon environment, find it much more difficult to enter into contact with the Divine than, for example, those who are full of good will, although open to all kinds of influences; because as they have a well-organised separate existence they are generally self-sufficient. They are full of the sense of their personality, of their own existence, and it is much more difficult for them to conceive that they are nothing but an instrument of the Divine Force. On the other hand, one who feels somewhat fluid, not very precise, without very exact limits, who has not a well-built individuality, understands more easily that he is nothing by himself, that a force other than himself makes him act.

One must first of all find his psychic being and be identified with it. Afterwards, you may turn towards the desire-soul and convince it of its imbecility.

The All-Beautiful

This brings us to the symbol of Krishna and Radha. Krishna is He of whom Sri Aurobindo speaks as the divine Flute-Player,

that is to say, the immanent and universal Divine who is the supreme power of attraction. The soul is the psychic personality who is called Radha in India and who answers to the call of the Flute-Player.

I have been asked to say something on the Radha Consciousness. That means the way the individual soul answers to the Divine Call. Sri Aurobindo describes this thing as the capacity to find Ananda in everything by identification with the one divine Presence and a total self-giving to this Presence.

This has the power to change everything into perpetual ecstasy. Instead of seeing things in their discordant appearance one sees nothing but the divine Presence, the divine Will and the divine Grace in all things, so that each event, each element, each circumstance, each form changes into one way or one detail through which one can approach the Divine more intimately and deeply. All discord disappears, all ugliness vanishes. There is only the splendour of the divine Presence in a Love that radiates in all things.

It is evident that from the practical point of view, one must be capable of dwelling on this stable and unshakable height so that it does not produce undesirable results. It was probably for this reason that those who wanted to live there withdrew from the world and made the universal contact through Nature. I admit it is infinitely more easy to realise this state of consciousness when one is surrounded by trees and flowers and plants and even animals than in the midst of human beings. It is more easy, but it is not indispensable. Indeed if one wants a truly integral state, one must be able to have it every moment in the presence of anything and everybody.

There are many legends, stories, as that of Prahlad, for example, (which we saw the other day in a cinema) illustrating this state of consciousness. I myself had quite a tangible experience that if, in the presence of an enemy, a bad will, any danger, one can remain in that condition and see the Divine in everything, the danger will have no effect, the bad will will not touch you and

the enemy will be transformed or run away. It is a clear fact. I tell you your enemy will be able to do nothing to you; if it does anything it will be only a sign that the state of consciousness in which you are is not sufficiently pure and complete.

But I must add one little word which is sufficiently important. You must not try to possess this consciousness with the motive that it will bring you protection or help. You must have it sincerely, spontaneously, constantly. It must be a way of being that is normal, natural, effortless. Then it is effective. But if you try to imitate in the least the movement with the idea that you will obtain a result, then the result is not obtained. On the other hand if you are truly sincere, that is to say, if the experience is integral and spontaneous, then it becomes all-powerful.

When you look into the eyes of someone, if you are able to see the divine Presence there spontaneously, the worst movements will vanish, the worst obstacles will disappear and a flame of joy will awake, in the other one as well as in oneself. If there is the least possibility in the other, a little crack in the bad will, that shines forth.

It is that state that is being spoken of. That you see everywhere, that you meet everywhere and in such a multiple way and so wonderfully harmonised that all difficulties disappear.

Perhaps there is one in a million who has realised this consciousness. But as I have said, to have it perfectly one needs to be in solitude generally; otherwise there are too many necessities brutally material that contradict it. But if you are able to get it in the absolutely perfect way, all that surrounds you becomes the Divine.

(ii)

Tears, absence of the Beloved...these things are on the way, when one has not yet reached the goal. Men insist too much on them, because they like to prolong the human route, because they enjoy the route. That pleases them. It pleases them to dispute with the Divine, it pleases them to feel the separation. These

are elements that are pleasurable. They are in the human consciousness and they wish to remain there.

If you wish to remain in contact with life, a sort of relativity continues in the experience. But when there is the perfect identification all that goes away immediately. Then one feels as if one misses the pleasure of a whole dramatic piece. Something has gone out of life, that is to say, its illusion. Men have yet need of a considerable amount of illusion. They cannot enter straight into the Truth.

After all, you must have realised in you a perfect identity if you are to have no more the sense of separation. And once the perfect identity is realised, the story is at its end, there remains nothing to narrate.

That is why it is said that if the creation realised perfect identity with the Divine, there will be no more creation. If you realised this perfect identity and if the whole universe realised this perfect identity in which there is no possibility of distinction, the universe will not be there : it would mean the return of Pralaya.

The solution then is to find ananda even in this kind of play, in interchange, in give and take. Otherwise in identity there remains only identity. If the identity is complete and perfect there is no more objectivisation, objectification.

I already spoke of the story of Love. That began by the ananda of identity and after the entire circuit of the creation it ends in the ananda of union. If there were not this circuit, there would never be the joy of union, there would only be the ananda of identity. And perhaps the circuit has been done precisely in order that the ananda of identity might find its culmination and fulfilment in the ananda of union.

But if there is the perfect identity, the sense of union cannot exist. Union implies something else than the perfect identity. The two words express quite different experiences and yet the result is the same. Only the second is rich with all that was not in the first, the richness of the sum total of the universal experience.

18-7-1956 NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

SYMBOLS—VISIONS—VOICES

(A moon appears over the crown of my head; its light passes into the heart.)

The moon indicates the spiritual light. It passed from above into the heart centre.

2-12-1935

* *

(A feeling that I have gone very high and felt there a unique quietness. Was it an ascent ?)

Yes. An ascent of the consciousness into the higher levels above the ordinary mind where one becomes aware of the Self (Atman) and the spiritual wideness and silence.

2-12-1935

* *

(I hear sometimes a pleasant sound like the humming of the bees.)

Such sounds (bells, bees, crickets etc.) are stated in the Upanishads to be signs of realisation approaching. They come very commonly when the inner or subtle consciousness is awake.

2-12-1935

* *

(A big semi-circle of white blue light just above the head.)

The lights indicate the action of certain forces, usually indicated by the colour of the light. Whitish blue is known as Sri Aurobindo's light or sometimes Sri Krishna's light.

25-2-1936

* *

(Just above the head the sky full of stars.)

Stars indicate points of light in the ignorant mental consciousness.

Moon=spiritual light

Sun=The higher Truth Light.

25-2-1936

* *

(A small circle of blue light rotating above the head.)

It depends on the shade of the blue. Blue light, according to the shades means several different things.

25-2-1936

* *

(An electric-like current in the middle of the spine.)

It is the flowing of the force through the spine. In the Tantric system the spine is considered as the natural passage of the Force, because it is in the spine that all the six centres rest.

5-3-1936

* *

(The sea with a bright reddish light over it)

The sea here often indicates the vital.

5-3-1936

* *

(The figure of Sri Krishna near the left shoulder of the Mother. Was it a correct vision ?)

It depends. If it came spontaneously, it is a correct vision. But sometimes there are thought-forms or thought-images.

17-3-1936

* *

(Sparks of pink light before the eyes; at times a heap of them.)

Sparks or movements of light indicate the play of forces in the consciousness or around it.

17-3-1936

* *

(A light, a being coming out of myself, becoming one with the light, rising up into a wideness.)

It may be either the mental being or the vital being rising up to enter the wide higher consciousness above.

20-6-1936

* *

(A many-petalled lotus above the crown of the head.)

It was probably the centre above the head where the human mind meets with the higher consciousness.

20-6-1936

* *

(OM above the crown of the head)

OM there indicates the realisation of the Brahman on that level of the (higher) consciousness.

20-6-1936

* *

(X, a young boy often hears voices against Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.)

It must be from those around that he gets it. It is usually by associating with people who have bad thoughts and the habit of revolt that that begins—either one hears or listens to things one ought not to hear or these things are mentally communicated and then they grow upon the mind.

17-3-1936

* *

(While placing my head on the Mother's lap during Pranam I saw there a blue light.)

It depends on the shade of the blue. Whitish blue is Krishna's light or mine; deeper blues often indicate a light of the higher consciousness.

4-6-1936

* *

(During meditation my body became like a statue.)

A touch of stillness from above.

4-6-1936

* *

(A flower of *Divine Love* at the centre of my heart.)

It is a symbol of Divine Love in the psychic.

3-7-1936

* *

(While travelling in the bus I felt something within to be quiet and still.)

It is an experience of quietude within. It cannot be said to be settling unless you feel it often and for a long time.

3-7-1936

* *

(At times while walking I feel as if the whole atmosphere is moving with me.)

It must be a consciousness of your own universal being that you have for a moment in this form.

19-8-1936

* *

(Image of Hanuman over my head, and then within the heart.)

Hanuman stands for Bhakti.

19-8-1936 SRI AUROBINDO

THE SOARING DIVINE GRACE OVER THE WORLD

SINCE Mother's signature hangs in the Library hall[1] in truly superhuman size, thousands of visitors have passed before it. Many have inquired about the meaning of these brush strokes, but quite a few have only stood and looked, and one or two have even exclaimed : "How beautiful !" Invariably these few were artists by calling : singer, dancer, tabla player, calligrapher. These few understood, without being told ; the great majority feel something, but would like to have a mental explanation.

Just as Mother's physical presence means something different for each person and at each moment, so one can see in Mother's signature the flight of a bird, the billows of the ocean, rain clouds in the sky, a lightning flash, Kali's sword, Shiva's trident, or the movement of a fairy wand transforming the desert into a garden, the movement of a shepherd gathering in his flock with one arm while keeping the wolf away with the other.

But if we remember Mother's work, then we can see the whole of her mission on earth expressed in her signature : Nature's aspiration, the answering movements of soul and spirit, then the full coming down of the Supramental Force, finally the sweeping horizontal movement of gathering in the whole —and looking deeper we will see how Ananda led the brush in its swaying movement of creation and destruction, laya and lila, out of the ecstasy of rest into the dance of time.

How can all these be expressed with so few movements of a pen, some lines and dots on a piece of paper ?

This is one of Mother's secrets.

MEDHANANDA

[1] Sri Aurobindo International University Centre

THE TEACHING OF SRI AUROBINDO (6)

The Secret of the Veda

THIS in sum is the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo. It is based on his Truth-vision and yogic realisation. The validity of this Knowledge can indeed be tested by any one who chooses or is called upon to do so ; only, he has to take to the appropriate means therefor i.e. to practise the yogic discipline relevant to it. A verifiable formulation of Truth-knowledge such as this needs no other external support to buttress or commend it. Yet, it is interesting, even instructive, to see how far it is in consonance with the body of higher knowledge and practice that has formed the core of the Indian spiritual tradition dating from prehistoric origins. And this tradition has been recorded in the hymns of the Veda, the Upanishads and the Gita. How far do they corroborate the integral truth of Sri Aurobindo's Teaching which embraces all life as a real manifestation of God, affirms its character as a progressive revelation of an immanent Divine Power and envisages a growing displacement of its characteristic features of Ignorance, Incapacity and Death by the emergent verities of Knowledge, Power and Immortality ? Sri Aurobindo has plumbed into these scriptures and presented their ancient but eternal message in a series of expositions which accompanied his enunciation of the philosophy of *Life Divine* and the means to realise it, the *Synthesis of Yoga*.[1]

Sri Aurobindo does not accept the superficial reading, by western scholarship, of a history of primitive nature-worshipping Aryans into the hymns of the Veda. To these scholars the hymns

[1] All of these appeared originally in the pages of *The Arya* and are now published in separate volumes.

are nothing more than liturgies of a pastoral people in the infancy of social growth, propitiating the powers of physical Nature whom they worshipped in awe as gods. Neither does he accept the common indigenous ritualistic interpretation as the sole meaning of the texts. To him Veda is what the word *Veda* means, Book of Knowledge (*vid* to know). It is just what it has been claimed to be in the running tradition of the land, what it has been celebrated to be in the countless utterances of her long line of Sages and men of God—a Revealed Scripture, *S'ruti*, the sole Fount of Knowledge basing the way of life that is India's own.

The authors of the hymns of the Veda were not poets who composed verses but Seers who heard the Truth, *satyaśrutaḥ kavayaḥ*[1], and found the *word* for it,—carved out of the heart, *hṛdā taṣtān mantrān*.[2] They were Mystics, the real founders of the early societies of the Aryans, of the type found elsewhere among peoples under identical conditions of growth e.g. Egypt, Greece, Persia, Chaldea etc. Everywhere these men devoted to a life of inner culture and soul growth pursued a double line of development, of self-knowledge and of world-knowledge. The Rishis of the Veda were men of this mould.

The age in which they lived was one in which the human mind had not yet arrived at the ratiocinative working of the intellect. It was a stage governed by the faculties of imagination, symbolic perception and an uninhibited play of intuition. The awakened minds sensed everywhere a Reality, a Truth dwelling behind the physical forms which peopled the universe. They perceived an underlying unity behind the variegated multiplicity of Nature. In the course of their inner self-building they saw that behind the activities of the elements of physical Nature there were Powers that ruled. Not only in the physical universe around but too in the psychical sphere within. The Rishis sought communion with these Powers, the Gods, for attaining mastery over Nature within and Nature without and worshipped them.

[1] Rv. V. 57. 8; VI. 49. 6
[2] Rv. I. 67. 2

To the vision of these seers, this physical world was only a part, a quarter[1], the downmost, of the cosmic Extension. Behind and above, they perceived other worlds, in a gradation as it were, the worlds of Power, Knowledge, Light and Bliss. Having perceived they set out to acquire the means to reach there and live in them a life luminous denied to ordinary mortality. This is the meaning of their endeavour to invoke the Gods who preside, severally and jointly, over these different tiers of the Creation. Thus is Agni lauded as the God presiding over Earth, Physical Nature, Vayu the Deity of Sky, the atmospheric region, the Life-expanse, Indra the Lord of Heaven, the extension of the Mind and so on. The Deities are realised as so many fronts, personalities of the One Great Godhead, *Mahat ekam*, who manifests the All out of Himself.[2] They are the children of Light, the Infinite Creative Consciousness, Aditi. Their function is not only to participate in the governance of the Cosmos but also to help man, the son of Earth, to grow towards the greater Truth of himself, the Truth of Immortality. He invokes their aid by means of prayer, by Sacrifice, by giving to them his own self, all that he is and has, and they respond. This growth of man through sacrifice is figured as a journey from plateau to plateau on the hill of being, *sānoḥ sānum*.[3] It is also described as a battle; for in his effort to grow, man is always faced with the obstruction of the Powers of Falsehood and Ignorance, the forces that deny and prevent, the brood of Diti, the Divided Consciousness. The Gods fight the battle for man and win him victory.

This in brief is the outline of the inner Teaching of the Rishis. But this was, as elsewhere, imparted only to the qualified few, the initiated. For the rest, the *profanum vulgus*, a popular religion and ritual were erected but it was woven round these central truths with a wealth of imagery and symbol; with the

[1] Rv. X. 90. 3
[2] Rv. X. 81. 3
[3] Rv. I. 10. 2

result that for those who were initiated, the inner meaning was patent while to others the outer frame was sufficient in its opulence and grandeur. It may be noted in passing that even the outer worship was meant to be effective, as in the scheme of the Mystics the words and formulæ of worship, *mantras*, had an intrinsic power for purposes inner as well as outer.

Thus they arranged their thoughts, their expression, the very details of their worship in a system of parallelism. They were helped in this by the peculiar state of their language at that time. Words then were still living vocables of feelings and nervous responses to phenomenon, objective and subjective. Each root had several significances and words derived from them carried the multi-significance of the roots with them. Thus the word *Vṛka* meant a wolf not because it was so named arbitrarily by experts. It derived from the root *vṛc* to tear and the wolf as a tearer came to be denoted by the word *Vṛka*. By implication it also signified anything that tears or divides. So too the word *go*, which meant the quadruped cow, stood also for a ray, ray of light. The Rishis made capital use of this double or even multi-meaning of words, so natural to the Sanskrit language of that age, and succeeded in producing a hymnology which had one import, a secret, to the initiate and another, veiling it, to the common man.

And what is the Secret concealed in the hymns, described by the Rishi himself as *niṇyā vacānsi*,[1] secret words, which reveal their wisdom only to him who has the *eye*, the Seer, *kāvyāni nivacanāni kavaye* ?

II

This world of man is a world in the shadow of Ignorance. It is mixed with much falsehood[2] and error which disables him

[1] Rv. IV. 3. 16
[2] Rv. VII. 60. 5

from living in the fullness of his limbs, body, mind and life. But this is not the whole truth. Looming over this creation riddled with imperfections and *crookednesses*, there is a Truth of unbounded Power, Absolute Knowledge, Illimitable Joy and Immortality. The Seers of the Veda see in the life of man a constant seeking towards this greater Life. The Home of this Knowledge, Power and Bliss is a Great world of Light, Mahas, which is the real source, the foundation above, *upari budhna*, of the Universe. It is the larger Heaven, the *bṛhat dyauḥ* beyond our lower triple hemisphere of earth, sky and heaven,—the Right, the Truth, the Vast, *satyam, ṛtam, bṛhat*.[1] It is to reach this plenary Home of Truth, *sadanam ṛtasya*,[2] in his consciousness that the Rishi aspires. To this end he seeks the sustaining aid of the Gods, Agni, Indra, Vayu, Surya, Brihaspati and others who in response to his call and self-offering, take birth i.e. manifest their power in him, found their respective states of consciousness in his being, and lead him on the Journey by the Path of Truth, *ṛtasya panthā*. They engage his adversaries from the nether darkness and win for him the undying Light of Swar, the Sun-World, and the Bliss of Immortality.

This is the central Doctrine of the Mystics of the Veda. They affirm the reality of life as a manifestation of the Divine creative Godhead and seek for and develop the means to purge each individual formation of its imperfections and lead it towards its rightful fulfilment in a fuller Knowledge, Power and Joy in a consciousness greater than the human. And that too not in a paradise somewhere beyond. It is here and now, *today*,[3] that the Vedic seer seeks to enjoy wide earth and felicity, attain lordship *now*.[4] A full span of life blossomed in all the petals of the being is what he envisages :

[1] Av. XII. 1. 1
[2] Rv. I. 164. 47
[3] Rv. IX. 84. 1
[4] Rv. VII. 41. 4

Ye Gods, may we with our ears listen to the happy good,
Ye Adored, may we with our eyes see the happy good;
With limbs and bodies firm may we, extolling you,
attain the (full) term of life granted by the Gods.
A hundred autumns stand before us...[1]

This is the Ideal set by the Ancient Fathers. Whatever may have been the subsequent formulations of the Indian seeking of the Spirit—and they are many—her genuine tradition has always kept faithful to this sun-lit Vision even as the several lines of Yoga that came to be developed later on have all derived from the occult practice and discipline perfected by these Mystics of the Veda for self-fulfilment.

M. P. PANDIT

[1] Rv. I. 89. 8,9

THE SUN OF INDIA'S DESTINY

"THE Sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world"—thus spoke Sri Aurobindo in the first decade of this century.

It is heartening to find that as time rolls by, his powerful prophetic words are fulfilling themselves, and those of us who are endowed with some imagination and have some knowledge of the course of Indian history and culture, above all of the aspirations and urges of her inner, deeper spirit cannot fail to see that India's destiny in years to come is very bright indeed. It is truly like "the Sun", as Sri Aurobindo saw it, and like the sun its life-giving rays, warmth-and-prosperity-giving light will not only overflow her own territory but Asia and the world as well.

India's Past

The past of India is one of the most glorious chapters of human history. It was not only in the realm of the spirit, the inner, invisible, tremendous regions of the true being of man that she explored immeasurable riches of truth, of knowledge and proclaimed to the world through words as well as actions and experiments that we all are "children of immortality"; that we are the evolving divinity in actuality and could reach the very highest peak of divine perfection if we so aspired and willed. In the realm of material life and civilization, too, hers was an achievement which strikes wonder in the mind of even the advanced unprejudiced modern man. Not only in the fields of fine arts, sculpture, poetry and drama but in those of engineering, medical, astronomical, philosophical, political, industrial and commercial enterprises too she was in the vanguard of the ancient world. True,

compared with the advances made in recent times by the Western world in these material pursuits, even in much of the realm of thought, our country's achievements may now look a little pale. But this is more true of only the enslaved India which came to an end on the 15th August, 1947.

India's Future

Indeed, August 15, 1947, marks for our country "the end of an old era and the beginning of a new age". The way in which India has been conducting herself since her independence both within her own territory and without, the numerous plans and schemes and experiments through which she has been organizing her economic, industrial, scientific, educational and general political and cultural life, despite the many obstacles and shortcomings, moral as well as material, give us ample scope to hope that if India's past was bright and glorious, her future is going to be yet brighter and more splendid. The sun of India's destiny that has already risen is sowing as well as nourishing on her material no less than spiritual soil such rare seeds of light and truth and wealth and prosperity that her past glory will look small when measured against what is in store for her in the future.

Such a bright future as we envisage, however, cannot come about if we think of the advancement of our country along only material lines, as most of us seem to be doing at present. It is undoubtedly necessary if we aim at the raising of the standard of our life—and certainly we must not only aim at it but aim at it high enough—that we should have big, multipurpose economic, industrial, technological and scientific projects and undertakings. We must be able to set up big factories and industries and up-to-date, large-scale farms and orchards in order to produce wealth and prosperity to the maximum of our capacity for our teeming growing population. We must harness science and latest technical skill and knowledge for tapping the rich material resources of our country to the full. Our economic

plans must be so organized as to ensure the maximum possible production and equitable distribution of the elementary needs and amenities of civilized life, and our political machinery must be so geared as to provide the maximum possible encouragement, incentive and financial co-operation to the fruitful implementation of our economic undertakings and enterprises. Even if the large majority of us have to pass through some periods of stress and strain on this account, we must be prepared to undergo legitimate suffering and hardship in the hope that our sacrifices will bear good fruit in the near future and if we do not survive to enjoy the fruits of our toil, our children—i.e. the future India that is in the making today—will reap the rewards of our strenuous labour. Also, we must so reorganize our educational and cultural life as to ensure the increasing growth of not only well-disciplined, good-natured, educated, enlightened, artistically minded, beauty-and-cleanliness-loving citizens but newer and richer and freer patterns of thought, knowledge and vision in our developing country. Our conception of material prosperity, of the increase in our standard of life should be based not only upon political and economic factors, howsoever prominent a share they may take in the present scheme of things. On the contrary, it is to be sufficiently broadened and enriched so as to include the healthy and prosperous growth of the very personality of the Indian citizen and this certainly means the inclusion of his intellectual, artistic, moral and cultural well-being and development in our material plans from the very beginning. It is an error on our part if we think that our economic well-being should come first and that we must concentrate our all upon it for the present and that the qestion of intellectual development should be tackled later. As a matter of fact, if we have already developed a predominantly economic-and-political outlook, wə should have the wisdom to perceive that the intellctual and cultural growth of a people or nation should be made an integral part of the economic undertaking in order to ensure a well-balanced, and avoid a lop-sided, mode of living.

And yet this will not be enough, firstly, because most of our ideas about the material and intellectual and even moral development have more or less the Western stamp as well as technique; and secondly, because, in our eagerness and haste to raise the material and intellectual standards of our country, we have become unmindful of the very roots of our true individual and national life, the fountainhead of all our material and mental life and well-being. Most of our political leaders and statesmen have no doubt begun to talk today fairly loudly enough of the spiritual and cultural heritage of our country and yet when they set about indicating the nature and complexion of this heritage, they really betray either colossal ignorance or cheap, conventional, claptrap verbiage. To talk of the ancient cultural heritage and spirituality of our country without having any true knowledge of it is, in our opinion, as much an act of national disservice as to talk of importing to our country everything which has the attractive glamour and authority of the Western civilization but is unsuited to our native genius.

The Value of Sri Aurobindo's Words

In this connection we should like to recall the words of Sri Aurobindo once more. We value his words because we feel that by his lifelong dedication to the political and intellectual and spiritual upliftment of his country, by his distinguished services to the country in the early phase of the movement for its independence, through his pen, speeches and deeds, by virtue of the enormous amount of political, intellectual and spiritual knowledge of both the East and the West which he came to master in his life, the long life of unflinching *Sadhana* which he led, the deep love for humanity which he cherished, and the unique creative genius which he transmitted through the Ashram running in his name at Pondicherry, etc., etc. he has come to acquire a position in our life and thought, which deserves all possible respect and attention. It was not for nothing that our beloved poet Tagore

had said of him long ago : "At the very first sight I could realize that he (Sri Aurobindo) had been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through his long process of realization had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant with an inner light and his serene presence made it evident to me that his soul was not crippled and cramped to the measure of some tyrannical doctrine which takes delight in inflicting wounds upon life.

I felt that the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, 'You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice, 'Hearken to me.' "

Indeed, there is no doubt whatsoever in our mind that Sri Aurobindo had the Word and he has already spoken it in not only distinct but varied tones, in a rich measure, full of the vivid beauty and sweetness of poetry and the power and certitude of the voice of Truth. India is speaking to the world through his voice. The only thing wanting is that we, his countrymen and the world should be now increasingly willing to accept it from him. The first sure step in this direction is to turn more and more to his speeches, writings and letters, all of which cover all possible aspects of our complex, multiple life and its various needs.

India must be Herself First

In our view, India must be herself first. As Sri Aurobindo said in one of his speeches in the early years of this century, "We must know our past and recover it for the purpose of our future. Our business is to realise ourselves first and mould everything to the law of India's eternal life and nature." On another occasion he remarked : "India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature. This does not mean, as some narrowly and blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the stream of Time or

happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible and, above all, unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development. It means simply to keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive, and evolve out of it all we do and create."

It will be to our good if we remember these words at every stage of our national reconstruction. While we embark upon a policy of speedy democratisation of our political and constitutional life, rapid socialization of our economic life, swift industrialization of our material resources and more or less popular dissemination of education, art and culture, we are not to overlook the basic fact whether we are doing it all on more or less Western lines or developing these things in accordance with "the law of our own nature". True, we are not to reject things and values which have been "first developed or powerfully expressed by the West" and which appear new to our life and culture. But this we can do best only if we "keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive". While we wax so eloquent upon the fruitfulness of our First and Second Five-Year plans, for example, or the catholocity of our Constitution, we must pause and ponder whether we are "keeping our centre, our essential way of being."

Number One Problem for India

But what is "our centre, our essential way of being" ? It is but the true evolving soul of India. It is this which we must discover and realize first. It is here that we must concentrate our attention first and build up our true strength on a stable foundation. Hence it is that the Mother unhesitatingly said the other day : "The number one problem for India now is to find back and manifest her soul." It is only when we succeed in doing so that India can truly and fully "rise to the height of her mission

and proclaim the Truth to the world". But it is not only for the sake of her "mission" and proclamation of Truth to the world that she must first "find back and manifest her soul". It is also for her own proper existence, plenty and prosperity, material, intellectual, moral and spiritual advancement that she must do so.

What do we really mean when we say that India must discover and manifest her soul ? Well, the word 'soul' itself is often so much misunderstood as well as misused that it is no wonder if the expression 'soul of India' should evoke an unfavourable response from a modern educated Indian. At any rate, it is not likely to make an immediate appeal to the sophisticated, civilized Indian of today. We had, therefore, better clarify our mind about it before we proceed further.

The task is certainly not an easy one; even the saints and sages who are in patient search for their 'soul' feel a lot of difficulty and take time in finding and understanding it. But one thing is certain to them. It is that without its search and discovery their life has hardly any meaning or value or even direction and goal. Its importance in our life is, therefore, paramount.

The Meaning of the Soul

By 'soul' we mean the very central, fundamental, indispensable part of our being. It quickens, impels and supports the movements and reactions of our body, the urges, aspirations as well as desires of our vital life, and illuminates our mental awareness and knowledge of things and above all generates the will-power within us and gives the decisive turn to our existence, material, mental and moral. It is the chief sovereign and custodian of our life and is both an impulse and a law, or to use a philosophical language, a being as well as becoming. It is both static and dynamic in its nature, that is to say, if it naturally is at peace in itself, self-realization, self-unfoldment is no less its inherent nature. Also freedom, perfect freedom of thought, action and

everything is inherent in its very texture or nature and though apparently it appears to lie in a state of bondage to our body and mind, it is actually always engaged in realizing its full freedom, which becomes clear to us as daylight the moment we develop a more critical and deeper perception of our thinking and action. Then again, we find that once a man becomes even partially aware of his soul, he naturally gets turned towards the Divine, i.e. the very highest perfection of truth, consciousness, force and bliss of which he is capable of imagining. No less does a man who is actively aware of his soul become, in due course, aware of its, i.e. his own, essential immortality though his body and vital and mind come to an end. We may briefly sum up by saying that the soul of a man is that indispensable part of him which is self-existent, self-willed, self-acting, self-aware, complete, free and in a state of eternal delight and immortality. As our sages and seers of old said, it is neither born nor is it subject to death. It always, eternally is, and at the same time in this evolving manifested universe, it is constantly realizing itself with a full amount of consciousness. Still, it is really very difficult to say all about it until one gets completely identified with it, which itself is an extremely difficult act. Anyway, what is to be noted by all of us is that there is in it really nothing fundamentally of what we call the religious, moral, ethical, ritualistic, credal etc. all of which are the creations of our vital desires and mental thinking. Some soul-experience may be behind the religious or moral codes and creeds which we set up and try to follow but their formulation, organization, preaching etc. are all the product of the mind, the mental man rather than the spiritual man. Of course, the very greatest prophets or *Avatars* as we popularly call them are an exception but even in their case we cannot fail to find that mind plays quite a large part in the formulation and organization of the soul-experience in the form of religion or philosophy or any moral system with which they may be popularly associated. Only their mind has the support and force of the soul from behind and that's why the religious philosophies or moral systems started

in their name acquire such a power of persuasion and appeal and fulfilment. Even then, if we are dispassionate students of history we shall discover that the *Avatars* themselves do not start or organize any religion. It is long after they cease to exist in the earthly frame that a religion or philosophy or moral system is founded in their name on the basis of their soul-experience and soulful words. Except Lord Buddha, the great *Avatars* of our own country, for example, *Avatars* like Rama and Krishna have hardly any religion or moral philosophy and system associated with them in the way in which we have Buddhism, Christianity or Islam. Ours has been really what is known as *Sanatan Dharma*, eternal as the very soul of a thing itself, self-existent and self-propelled, and not attached to any particular human, religious figure.

The Soul of a Nation or People

Just as an individual has a soul which through its various embodied formations and vicissitudes is eternally realizing itself and whose discovery by him is really the basic, fundamental need and purpose of his life, so every people, race or nation, nay the entire earth itself has a hidden, self-realizing, evolving soul, and all those persons who would like to do anything for their race or nation or mankind or the world must make it their first and last, their most important duty to discover not only their own individual soul but also the soul of the thing for which they feel the urge to work. Of course, one may say that many of us have been doing through the ages things of improvement for ourselves as well as for our society, nation and mankind, without being consciously aware of either our own soul or the soul of a nation and mankind. Well, if we are to express our opinion on this, we shall say that firstly it is an ignorance on our part if we think that we live our lives and lead the nation or mankind or the world without having anything to do with either our soul or that of others, for the truth—the inescapable truth—is that behind everything

that we do, think or feel, it is the soul really which is at work, though in a veiled form and manner, whether we are conscious of it or not is immaterial. The soul, like the Divine, is a secret, invisible, subtle worker and though not visible to our senses or brain, is omnipresent in our life, individual as well as national and international. Then again, it is precisely because we do not bother to know, discover and realise either our soul or that of the nation or humankind for whom we profess to work that our actions are really a series of hit or miss, a play of some haphazard lucky gains and many stumblings and errors leading us in a direction and to a goal of which we have hardly any clear-cut and sure conception, and that's why we take so long and the world is taking so long to achieve even the little that we wish to achieve. On the contrary, if we, once for all, firmly decide to know and identify ourselves with our own soul or the soul of the thing for which we wish to work, we shall immediately begin to perceive and feel a tremendous difference in our actions. Not only this, we shall also begin to see Truth itself guiding our efforts and our actions proceeding on certitude, unfailing strength, right organization, yielding results which are in the interest of all. For, one of the other fundamental things which we also begin to discover on the path of true spirituality is that there is an essential kinship of union, of oneness between our soul and that of humanity and the world. If so, it is quite obvious how much of our artificially created, ego-born friction, tension and strife can be quickly and easily eliminated, even avoided, and forces of unity, peace and harmony in our individual as well as national and international life immediately and effectively released for the well-being of all. Indeed, one of the tremendous, the most important truths which the modern intellectual, political and economic man has to discover and realize is the immense power and beauty and harmony of the spiritual atom with its infinite chain of integral energy and force and purpose, which lies secretly lodged and coiled within us.

India's Soul-Power

And, therefore, when we plead that the number one duty of India is to "find back and manifest her soul", it only means that we should try to discover this hidden personality and source of power and peace and knowledge embedded in our country, understand the true meaning behind the various vicissitudes, the numerous spiritual, moral, religious, intellectual, vital anp material experiments and trials which she has been making all through the ages and also the true purpose for which she has now been allowed by the guiding Divinity to shake off her political and economic slavery—for spiritually she has always been free—at the present time. To talk of and even to actually practise 'Panch Shila' or the essential religious tenets of Lord Buddha or the moral edicts of Ashoka will not at all be enough, unless we also discover with a view to realizing in our individual and national lives the spiritual light of knowledge and truth embodied in the Gita, the Upanishads and the Vedas. And even then our work is not complete, for even if we admit that the Gita, the Upanishads and the Vedas are some of the sublimest and supremest achievements of human aspiration, they have upon them mostly the glory of the past whereas we have to march ahead to our future destiny. We can make use of them only as we are to use the other rich resources of the past for building a brighter, richer and stabler future. They can serve as means only for ends which are pregnant with infinite possibilities not only in the material field but also in the spiritual. We must not rest content with what we have achieved in the past, howsoever glorious and splendid it might be. We have to advance to renew the march to a still more glorious and brighter future in all the multiple directions of life and integral aspects of our individual and national personality. We are called upon to fulfil a still richer destiny. It is for this reason that we have been made free and are embarking upon so many gigantic plans and projects. Let us listen once more to what Sri Aurobindo told us long ago :

The True Purpose of the Resurgence of India and Asia

"Our aim will, therefore, be to help in building up India for the sake of humanity—this is the spirit of Nationalism which we profess and follow. We say to humanity : "The time has come when you must take the great step and rise out of a material existence into the higher, deeper and wider life towards which humanity moves. The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom within, not by harnessing the forces of Nature to the service of comfort and luxury, but by mastering the forces of the intellect and the spirit, by indicating the freedom of man within as well as without and by conquering from within external Nature. For that work the resurgence of Asia is necessary, therefore Asia rises. For that work the freedom and greatness of India are essential, therefore she claims her destined freedom and greatness, and it is to the interest of all humanity,...that she should wholly establish her claim."

India is the Guru of the World

"The future of India" is, thus, as the Mother said in 1954, "very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world". And, therefore, she clearly advised saying : "The Government of India ought to recognize the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly."

Already we are seeing the signs how "the future structure of the world" is being built upon India. It is to her that the tension-torn, war-weary and materially frustrated civilized world increasingly turns and as India develops her inherent spiritual power and moral and intellectual force, more and more will the world in future come to "depend on India".

In order that this chastening and transforming process

may be quickened and increasingly stabilised, it is, however, indispensable that India must herself grow in her "essential way of being and inborn nature", by simultaneously developing her inner powers of the spirit, her soul and assimilating to herself all that is being freshly developed and powerfully expressed by the West, by adding to her soul "the new light" and "added means or materials of our human self-development", by evolving out of this synthetic compound of what is best in the East and what is best in the West, a new life and humanity with values and ideals which are destined to lead us to an effulgent, radiant future. This is, indeed, the deeper destiny of free and modern India.

What is more, before we set ourselves up as the Guru of the world, we must, first, consent to be the humble disciples and instruments of that great spiritual and material Truth which is embedded in our own individual and national souls and which has found, in the past, such powerful utterances as we find recorded in the revealed knowledge of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. We must learn to be, as it has been already pointed out, ourselves first, before we can hope to teach the West or humankind as a whole, how to discover their own soul and live in a spirit of perfect concord and peace, mutual understanding and love for one another, indissolubly united in the soul though diverse and different in the expression and manifestation of it, like the Divine's creations.

SHREE KRISHNA PRASAD

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

X

Reason—Its Utility and Limitation

THE UTILITY OF REASON

REASON is our best guide and mentor so long as we live in the mind. It is the one faculty in us that distinguishes our mind from the mind of the animal. In the lower forms of animal life, it is the instinct that leads, instinct which has more of drive in it than light. Whatever light is in it is buried in the turbid waters of life. Instinct works within a very restricted field and under certain fixed conditions; but it has a sort of automatic sureness, a precision and resourcefulness in its movements which are really amazing. Scientific studies of the bees and the white ants have revealed with what marvellous ingenuity and exactitude their instinct works within its narrow orbit. In higher animals there is a development of the sense-mind which at once supplements and somewhat impairs the automatic action of the instinct. Cosmic intelligence appears to be working in the animals from behind a thick veil of unconsciousness and semi-consciousness. But in man, a part of his mind detaches itself more and more from the surges of life and the impulsions of desire. It learns to watch, distinguish between the good and the bad, the beneficial and the harmful elements and energies of human nature, and strives to acquire a deciding and determining voice in the complex play of the forces. This part of his consciousness tries to know and understand, to rescue his being from the helpless goad of automatic instincts and appetites, and exercise a sort of control, very partial and precarious in the beginning, over the disorderly elements of his nature. In the language of Yoga we can

say, it is the first, initial, tentative release of the mental Purusha from the hypnotic spell, the inexorable thraldom of Prakriti or Nature. The mental being or Purusha can now say "No", at least to some of the impulses of the lower nature, though his refusal of consent is, more often than not, overridden by the impetuous urges of the *prāna* or vital nature.

Reason is a function of this detached part of the mind. Its chief office is to arrange the concepts of the mind, reduce them to order, survey the field of thought and, clearing it of weeds and outgrowths, arrive at conclusions and judgements by a process of induction or deduction from the concepts arranged. It imparts to the mind a certain clearness, lucidity and subtlety, and to our thoughts and ideas some coherence and compactness; and corrects the errors of our perceptions. It helps us to seek the truth for itself, and guards us against the intrusion of our habitual preferences and prejudices, our emotional partialities and entanglements, and our proneness to take appearances for facts. Reason, at its best, is a sentinel warning us against the pitfalls of life and the ambushes of desires, and showing us the right road to follow. Sattwic reason, enlightened and poised reason, is a safeguard against many of the delusions to which our fancies, passions and emotions so often betray us.

"Sri Aurobindo places reason at the top of the human mind. In fact, reason is, during the whole period of the growth of the mind, the arbiter of its activity, the safest guide, the master, one might say, who controls, and so long as you resort to mental activities, even those that are most speculative, it is reason that must guide you, prevent you from going astray, taking the wrong road or being beguiled by more or less erratic and unhealthy imaginations."[1]

It is generally thought that in spiritual life one should discourage the development of reason and not allow it to interfere with the free play of the heart's emotions and intuitions. Though

[1] *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Feb. 1957.

there is some truth in this view, it must not blind us to the fact that uncontrolled emotions and pseudo-intuitions spell a greater danger to spiritual life than the intervention and domination of reason. We all know to what depths of demoralisation they usually descend who spurn the admonitions of reason, disregard its counsels, and elect to follow the obscure lead of their unchastened emotions. Vivekananda had once to lash out against some of his brother disciples who had given themselves up to extravagant emotional paroxysms in the mistaken belief that such swoons and wailings were a sign of intense love and devotion for God. Vivekananda branded them as hysterics and neurotics, and charged them to put an immediate end to all that imbecile, unmanly blubber.

The Mother is very emphatic in regard to the utility of reason up to a certain stage of mental evolution. She considers it dangerous to give up the help of reason so long as one lives in the mind and acts from the mind. "It is possible", she says, "to give up reason only when you have passed beyond the mental activity. It is possible only when you have given yourself totally to the Divine. It is possible only when you have no more desires. Reason must be the ruler until you have gone beyond the state where it is indispensable or merely useful."[1] It would be well to remember how categorically she commends reason and warns against its abandonment : "So long as there is an ego, so long as there are desires, so long as there is a personal will, so long as there are impulses and passions, preferences and attractions and repulsions, you cannot give up reason without falling into an unbalance."[2]

There is another point to consider in this connection. Those who have gone far in the study of human nature and acquired an insight into the working of the subtle forces of the supraphysical worlds surrounding our material existence, know that influences and suggestions are always streaming into us from them. We do not see where these influences come from, and we take their

[1] & [2] *Bulletin of Physical Education* Feb. 1957.

suggestions as being our own, springing from some part of our own being. Desires, cravings, all sorts of impulses pour into us pell-mell from these environing regions. Some of the suggestions are good and helpful, while others are evil and harmful; and it is this medley of heterogeneous elements that renders our life so confused and miserable. Reason is our only safeguard against the inroads of the unfriendly or unhelpful forces. Its discrimination protects us from many a dangerous snare. It is true that our reason itself is often deluded, bribed or blackmailed, but whatever its faults and shortcomings, it is still the best guide we possess so long as we are not in the hands of the Divine.

"There is another condition altogether indispensable for you to be able to do without reason. And that is, not to be open at any point to the suggestions of the hostile world. As a matter of fact, if your are not completely freed from the habit of answering to adverse suggestions, then by giving up your reason, you give up reason itself, that is to say, common sense, and you begin to behave here also in such an incoherent manner as may lead you to a dangerous lack of balance. And if the adverse suggestions are not to touch you any more, you must be exclusively under the influence of the Divine."[1]

"You see now that the problem is not so easy. It means that unless you are completely illumined and transformed, it is always much safer to act by your reason. It may be a limitation, indeed it is a great limitation, but it is also a check which prevents you from becoming one of those half-crazy people who are too many in the world."[2]

It is evident that the Mother is not one of those who regard reason as the highest possible faculty of man and the only leader of his life. It is only a guide so long as he lives in the mind—it bridges the gulf between instinct and intuitive knowledge. It leads and enlightens human consciousness during a particular

[1] & [2] *Bulletin of Physical Education* Feb. 1957.

period of transition in its evolution. But for it, man would have remained a bond slave of his desires and passions, and a sport of his lower impulses. He could not have advanced a step beyond his aboriginal animality.

"Reason is a very respectable person, and like all respectable persons, it has its limitations and partialities; but none the less it is of great utility. There are many things you would have done, if you had no reason, and which would have led you straight to your ruin, because so long as you have not reached the highest regions, your best means for discrimination is reason.

Naturally it is neither the ideal nor the peak; it is only a guide to lead you through life, a check that protects you from extravagances, excesses and disordered passions, and above all from such impulsive acts as may lead you to the abyss.

One must be quite sure of oneself, quite free from ego and perfectly surrendrered to the Divine Will if one is to dispense with reason safely."[1]

The Mother's words are very clear and incisively definite in regard to the role reason plays in our life. So long as the ego and the desires are there in us, so long as we are swayed by passions and attachments, preferences and prejudices, the guidance of reason is indispensable. To surrender reason is to surrender to darkness and invite disaster.

Reason as a Bar

But man arrives at a stage in his evolution when reason becomes the greatest bar to his further advance. What would have happened if our being had refused to outgrow the rule of instincts and impulses and develop the mind of reason ? It would have condemned itself to the vicious circle of desires and suffering, and there would have been no escape from it. But fortunately

[1] *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Feb. 1957.

it was made to forego the easy guidance of instincts and impulses and press forward towards a more developed mind of reason and discrimination and reflection, and evolve the higher potentialities of its consciousness and nature. Now that it has developed reason, it must be its constant aspiration and effort to purify it of all alloy, foster its growth towards perfection, and then proceed beyond it in search of higher instruments of knowledge. It would be as irrational for it to cling on to reason in spite of its intrinsic deficiencies and limitations and refuse to advance in evolution, as it would have been if it had clung on to the sense-mind of the animal and refused to rise towards the life of reason. And, strange to say, it is this very thing, this irrational refusal to transcend reason, that is one of the basic causes of the present crisis in civilisation. One notices with wonder a certain uncanny dread, even in the most enlightened elite of humanity, of trying to rise beyond reason and seek for a better instrument of knowledge than this blinkered arbiter of our life. Kant's mind sought to reach after intuition, but could not cut its moorings in reason. The same dread is discernible in Jung, the leading psychologist, who, at times, appears to be almost touching the fringes of the psychic and the spiritual, and then recoiling in sudden alarm lest he should lose the safe anchorage of reason and find himself floundering in the uncharted unknown. It must be borne in mind that an endeavour of our consciousness to transcend reason does not mean surrendering our reason to the subrational forces of our nature. Transcendence is the law of all earthly beings. Not to aspire and strive for self-transcendence is to obstruct the onward march of evolution. The present impasse is partly due to this evolutionary bottleneck. But more of this later on. For the moment let us see what are the inherent limitations of our reason.

The Limitations of Reason

Reason is, as the Mother says, only a guide in the ignorance. It has no sure knowledge of anything. It is characterised by two

incurable propensities—the propensity to doubt and the propensity to divide. Doubt always dogs its conclusions, and it cannot know anything without first dividing and analysing it. It works on the basis of the data furnished by the physical senses and are, therefore, more or less fettered to them in all its operations. It can grow in purity and develop towards freedom and perfection only if and as it detaches itself from the insistence of the desires, passions and attachments of the lower *prānic* or vital nature. It has also to liberate itself from the meshes of the sense-mind and its preferences and predilections, its habitual, mechanical thoughts and ideas. Reason can thus purify itself to some extent and acquire a certain balance and detachment, a certain impartiality and disinterestedness. But there is always a fatal limit to its development. Mental reason cannot get completely beyond the fundamental limitations of the physical brain out of which it has grown and to which it is tied. Its purity is always a qualified purity, exposed to surprise assaults from the passions and emotions of the unregenerate vital nature; behind its professed disinterestedness there lurk swarms of subtle, selfish interests, which cloud its perception and distort its judgement. It takes a regular training in self-culture or spiritual discipline to render reason even tolerably pure and free from the crippling and obscuring influences of the lower nature. Those who swear by reason and extol it as the highest possible faculty of man, capable of guiding him to his ultimate destiny, betray an ignorance of the complexity of human nature and the constitutional incompetence of reason to deal with the problems of the heart and life. Reason usually imposes stringent rules, represses and desiccates our feelings and emotions, and coerces many of the movements of the nature which it fails to understand or reduce to order; and, since it is never in possession of any assured knowledge, it cannot promote a harmonious development of our whole being. Either it is itself swayed by desires and passions, or it represses them so long as it can. But there is always the risk of the repressed energies erupting and swamping it with their burning lava.

Greek culture attained a great development of the mental reason, but in spite of its signal achievements, it was poor in the riches of Spirit. It neglected and discouraged its old tradition of mysticism, and tended more and more towards rationalism and humanism, with the result that, from Aristotle downwards, it began to describe a curve of steady decline and increasingly react to empiricism and scientific materialism till it ceased to exist except in its considerable but diluted contribution to Christian thought and Western life in general.

Reason may continue to help the growth of our being and consciousness, if it surrenders to intuition and opens to the higher light. The more it emancipates itself from the yoke of the physical mind, the more it can expand and brighten up with an unwonted light. But it finds it very difficult to do so—the knot of the ego is strongest in the intellectual mind. An exaggerated development of the mental reason without a concomitant refinement and deepening of the feelings and an openness and surrender to the higher light is harmful to our harmonious growth. Agnosticism, scepticism, utilitarian humanism, pragmatism, dialiectical materialism, and last but not least, logical positivism are the natural brood of the hypertrophied mental reason. When reason refuses to widen beyond its normal sphere of work and rise to higher regions of consciousness, it begins to look down and occupy itself with the passing objects and interests of life, and forgets its higher idealism. It becomes a self-deluded tool of the desires and preferences of the lower nature. It loses whatever light it had, its discrimination is eclipsed, and it is so much engulfed in the obscurity of the lower nature that it turns into its very opposite, unreason, supporting its specious judgements and erring decisions by unabashed quibbles and sophistry. It becomes then an agility gymnast, as the Mother characterises it.

"Reason is an agility gymnast. It can move in all varieties of ways, make infinite twists, the most impossible contortions with equal ease and skill....What Reason does and can do is to

justify, find arguments for whatever position it is put in or called upon to support. Its business is to supply "proofs": it can do so as the spider brings out of itself the whole warp and woof of the cobweb. There is no truth, that is to say, no conclusion which it cannot demonstrate with equal cogency...."[1]

What is indispensable for our reason to function in the right way and in the best interest of our integral development is rectitude, mental integrity. But that is not an easy thing to achieve. It presupposes a considerable purification of the lower nature. Unless reason rises above the surges of desires and attachments, unless it becomes more or less impersonal, it cannot lead us far on our evolutionary march. That is why it is said in the Upanishad that the soul cannot be realised by reason. A deliverer of our being from the obscure instincts of life, reason must grow mature enough to learn how to seek its own fulfilment in a spontaneous surrender to the higher light.

There is another disabling limitation under which reason labours. It proceeds by division and analysis, as we have already seen, for it inherits the basic function of the mind, which is to divide, to separate, to analyse into parts. It cannot deal with an undivided whole. When it synthesises, it does nothing better than putting the discrete parts together, agglomerating or assembling the diverse elements into a whole. But it often finds to its surprise that its syntheses abound with discrepant elements and anomalies.[2] Then it eliminates what it cannot harmonise and retains only those elements that agree with its preconceptions and cherished conclusions. When it deals with the ideas and views of other minds, its personal preferences and incapacity to reconcile apparently conflicting elements vitiates all its judgements. In philosophy its defects show conspicuously. It erects admirable fabrics of thought, trim, logical and symmetrical, but founded on

[1] *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* by Nolini Kanta Gupta, Part 7.

[2] "It is not in the mental consciousness that things can be harmonised and synthesised". The Mother.

uncertain postulates derived from the sense data and expanded and buttressed by inference and speculation. That is about the high watermark of its achievement. It can catch some broken reflections of truth, but not truth itself. Its theories are feats of intellectual speculation, but they do not lead human consciousness beyond the confines of the mind, they do not open doors upon infinity and eternity, they do not make us experience and live Reality. The basal differences between the speculative structures of the philosophers are the measure of the incapacity of mental reason to envisage truth in all its aspects and reconcile its apparent incompatibles and contradictions. If it accepts the impersonal aspect of Reality, it rejects the personal; if it regards Reality as static and inactive, it dubs all creation and action as illusion; or if, like Heraclitus and Bergson, it perceives the exclusive reality of the universal flux, it considers the status and immutability of Reality as myth and moonshine. If Brahman is nirguna or devoid of all qualities and attributes, it cannot be at the same time saguna or possessor of qualities. These are the usual trenchant oppositions created by human reason, even at its best, in the all-harmonising unity and integrality of Reality. It is baffled by the paradoxical nature of Reality, by its simultaneous possession of radical contraries. "It is a malady of the ordinary human intelligence which comes necessarily from separation, from division, that things must be either this or that. If you choose this, you turn your back on that."[1]

Reason and Intuition

It is only intuition that sees things in the whole. It commands an immediacy of knowledge which views the whole and the parts at the same time, and embraces their apparent contradictions in a vast sweep of unifying and harmonising vision. It is only intuition that can very well affirm, like the Upanishad :

[1] *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Aug. 1957.

"That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That is outside all this."...—Isha

The action of intuition is diametrically opposed to that of reason — it sees the One, the Indivisible, and the multiplicity as the manifold aspect or self-representation of the same One. It has not to analyse or divide in order to know. It knows by identity, by becoming what it wants to know. Reason, on the other hand, tries to know, now one aspect of truth and now another, now in one way, and now in another; but it never succeeds in knowing except in a very partial and fragmentary manner, for it creates an artificial gulf between itself and the object of its knowledge. All its action proceeds upon the basis of division, differentiation and separation. By dividing the indivisible, it renders the object of its knowledge unknowable. That is why agnosticism is the last word of reason's quest of knowledge. What it thinks it knows, is only the prismatic spectrum of appearances, the perpetual flux of changing forms, not Reality. And not knowing Reality, it does not know the truth of appearances either.

Reason and Faith

"Faith," says the Mother, "is the movement of the soul whose knowledge is spontaneous and direct. Even if the whole world denies and brings forward a thousand proofs to the contrary, still it knows by an inner knowledge, a direct perception that can stand against everything, a perception by identity".[1] It knows, but it cannot give reasons for what it knows. "It does not believe after proofs are given."[2] Faith originates from the very centre of our being. True faith is as deep and as strong as life itself. But reason cannot understand it. It scouts and chills it. It insists on proofs, on factual and objective evidences; and it peremptorily rejects all that eludes its objective tests. Thus it

[1] & [2] *Words of the Mother.*

shuts out an infinite range of knowledge from itself. The action of reason is mostly negative. It surveys and sifts, detects and rejects, watches and warns, checks and corrects. It is only rarely that it acts in a positive and constructive way. But faith is always positive and creative in its action. It possesses a confidence and a certitude which sharply contrast with the habitual doubt and scepticism of reason. Faith is a reflection of the knowledge of the soul, and has all the power of the soul behind it to fortify and support it in its self-fulfilment. Loss of faith is the greatest loss modern man has suffered on account of his exclusive reliance on reason.

Reason and Revelation

The greatest scriptures of the world, those that have given spiritual strength and sustenance, light and joy to humanity through the ages, are words of revelation, and not of reason. The Veda, the Upanishad, the Bible, the Avesta, for example, are so powerfully revealing, because they embody direct revelation. They are perennially fresh and creative, inspiring and ennobling and exalting, because they were not manufactured in the mind of reason, in the shadow of human ignorance, but flashed as revelation in the deeper or higher consciousness of man, which can be attained only by silencing and overpassing reason. Denouncing all mental judgements as ignorant and erroneous and describing the way to receive the higher light, the flash of revelation, the Mother says :

"If you wish to be a little wiser, observe things attentively, record them without pronouncing any judgment. When you will have contemplated them quietly within yourself, place them before the highest part of your consciousness, trying to keep yourself silently attentive and wait.

Then perhaps, slowly, as if coming from very far and from very high, something like a light will manifest itself. And you will know a little more of the truth."

That is the ancient, traditional way of attaining knowledge —by vision, by inspiration, by revelation, when thought has ceased, the mind of reason has been lulled to sleep, and an inner or higher level of consciousness has awakened in a spirit of intent receptivity. "There are higher regions of consciousness beyond the intellect; and you have to stop all intellectual activity, make your mind a total blank before you can reach there. And indulgence in even so-called higher or philosophical speculations can only block the way to the true consciousness and knowledge".[1]

The Fetish of Reason

Modern man has made a fetish of his intellect and reason, and that is why the evolutionary progress of his consciousness has been arrested. According to the Mother "the intellect that believes too much in its own importance and wants satisfaction for its own sake, is an obstacle to the higher realisation....People do not regard an all-engrossing satisfaction of the vital desires or the animal appetites as a virtue; the moral sense is accepted as a mentor to tell one the bounds that one may not transgress. It is only in his intellectual activities that man thinks that he can do without any such mentor or censor !"[2] Man's moral and spiritual sensibilities have been starved and atrophied by the arrogant autocracy of his intellectual reason. He cannot get away even for a moment from its frowning and withering look, though, it must be admitted, its frowns have sometimes a sobering and salutary effect upon our lower nature. His imagination[3] cannot soar as far and as freely as it could before, for reason damps its ardour and clips its wings. Even his intelligence has lost its ancient sweep and depth, its keenness, suppleness and creative vigour for want of moral and spiritual sustenance. Its activities have become hectic and desultory, flurried and shallow. It has

[1] *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* by Nolini Kanta Gupta—Part VI.
[2] *Words of the Mother.*
[3] Blake rejects reason as an enemy of imagination.

ceased to delight in the ideal, the glory that can be, the inspired thought and far-reaching reflection; but revels in petty details and niggling technicalities; and even wallows in the ugly and the repulsive, the coarse, the squalid, and the sordid. Alexis Carrel paints a true, though somewhat lurid, picture of the decay of reason and intelligence in modern man.

"In modern civilisation the individual is characterised chiefly by a fairly great activity, entirely directed towards the practical side of life, by much ignorance, by a certain shrewdness, and by a kind of mental weakness which leaves him under the influence of the environment wherein he happens to be placed. It appears that intelligence itself gives way when character weakens. For this reason, perhaps, this quality, characteristic of France in former times, has so markedly failed in that country. In the United States the intellectual standard remains low, in spite of the increasing number of schools and universities....Modern civilisation seems to be incapable of producing people endowed with imagination, intelligence and courage. In practically every country there is a decrease in the intellectual and moral calibre of those who carry the responsibility of public affairs....It is chiefly the intellectual and moral deficiencies of political leaders, and their ignorance, which endanger modern nations."[1]

Degeneration of Reason

It is evident that human reason has darkened and degraded itself by refusing to evolve, to extend its horizons, and open to the higher light; and that it is unreason and its cohort, irrational desires, passions and mean selfishness, that have the whip hand of human nature today. This unreason is reason inverted and perverted and fallen from its high office. Like a fallen angel turned a malignant devil, it is dragging mankind down into a kind of civilised barbarism, which is the greatest menace to human culture, and even human existence. This civilised barbarism is

[1] *Man the Unknown* by Alexis Carrel.

capable of brutalities from which even the hardened conscience of the Chenghiz Khans and Timurs of the past would have shrunk in spontaneous horror—brutalities perpetrated from day to day, not in sudden fits of uncontrollable violence or vindictive passion, but in cold blood, with calm, calculated cruelty and self-justifying callousness; scientific tortures and massacres, devised and carried out with unblushing atrocity and sovereign nonchalance, and without any qualms of conscience, but rather with an imposing array of ostensible reasons disguising their revolting inhumanity. In the previous ages of human culture, passion and perfidy, cruelty and rapacity did not know how to hide their contorted features—they were self-exposed in all their unrelieved hideousness; but today human intellect and ingenuity have woven such deceptive masks over them that they play the butcher and the vandal in the name of civilisation and culture, in the best interests of world peace and security. They maul and mutilate, ravage and destroy all higher values and the priceless legacies of the past; they lay waste vast areas of productive earth and poison the health and happiness of millions of men; they pollute the very air we breathe and the very water we drink, with strident professions on their lips of the welfare of mankind and the advance of civilisation.

A Crucial Choice

It is a crucial choice that confronts man today : whether he should elevate and exceed reason and explore the vaster and luminous reaches of his consciousness, or let his reason pander to the base interests and brutish hungers of his animal nature. On the one hand, there is the hope of an infinite expansion of human consciousness in light and peace and creative harmony, an unimpeded flowering of man's immortal Spirit, and a radical transformation of his human into divine nature; and, on the other, the rampant chaos and anarchy of his animal appetites and blind impulses, rendered immensely more powerful and destructive by the subtlety of his intellect and reason. The very existence of

man on earth is at stake. To be or not to be is the sole question of the hour. Mind is at the end of its tether. Shall man cling on to his collapsing reason and find himself broken in the bottomless pit, or ascend to the supramental heights and renew his life and nature in its transforming light ?

Sublimation of Reason

Man is a pilgrim of eternity, and must not settle down at any wayside inn, however snug and secure it may seem to be. As he has been endeavouring to transcend the subrational stage of impulse and instinct, so too he must strive to ascend beyond reason to whatever higher powers and faculties await the exploration of his evolving consciousness. But reason can be transcended only when it is fully developed. It is dangerous to attempt a premature leap.

The Mother says that knowledge is above and beyond the mind of thought, but that the mind of thought and reason has to be fully developed before one can hope to transcend it in order to attain knowledge. She enjoins on everybody the duty of developing his reason, for it is only after he has risen to his full stature as a mental being that he can aspire to scale the spiritual heights.

"The first thing that is to be taught to every human being as soon as he is capable of thinking is that he must obey reason which is a kind of super-instinct of the species. And I repeat that it is not a question of spiritual life, but the very elementary wisdom of human, purely human, life. Every child must know that he is created to become a mental being, and if he is to manifest his human nature, reason must govern his life and not vital impulses. That is the elementary education that should be given everywhere.

The reign of reason should not end until the coming of the psychic law which manifests the Divine Will."[1]

[1] *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Aug. 1957.

Reason must not be thrown overboard, but purified and raised to its full stature and held up to the higher light. Instead of remaining a henchman of our desire-soul, it must achieve a control over it and help our being to offer all itself to the Divine.

RISHABHCHAND

THE LIFE DIVINE

(*An Outline*)

Vol. II

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS—ASCENT AND INTEGRATION

HAVING outlined the significance and aim of the evolutionary manifestation we must now consider the principles of its process and further development. It is clear that there is an invariable law of action in the cosmic Nature. In the evolutionary process we see three inter-related movements. First the physical foundation in which Matter is gradually moulded into a fit receptacle for the higher manifestation of consciousness. Secondly the ascent of consciousness itself. And thirdly the taking up of what has already been evolved into successively higher grades, so that each grade is a transformation and a total change of working of the being and nature.

By this process the action of the Ignorance must be changed into an action of Knowledge. Each ascent brings with it a partial change of the old nature which is subjected to a new principle. Inconscience is thus turned into a partial consciousness or ignorance seeking for knowledge. Ignorance is thus the middle term. There is, therefore, on the foundation of a total involution an emergence of an ascending series which will manifest even the highest power of all in the evolutionary Nature.

The evolutionary process must be modified at each stage, either by the emergence of some basic principle involved in the substance, or by the admission of something from outside

itself. If the new principle is already involved then when it emerges it will have to accept modification by the nature of the basic substance, and at the same time it will modify the basic substance by its own law of nature. If there is in addition a descent of its own principle from a sphere above the evolution then the new power may be established as a dominant element which will bring about a change of consciousness and action in the world. The modification of the original substance will depend on the power of the new principle.

The foundation of this evolution is Matter. Mind and Life are involved in Matter, and although they modify Matter, yet they are limited in their action by the law of the material Nature. Material substance becomes living substance, and then conscious substance; life, feeling and consciousness have come into material form. But Matter is not altogether transformed, life-nature has to submit to death, and mind is both materialised and vitalised. The bonds of the inconscience and the limits of ignorance are still there. It is clear that neither Mind nor Life is the original creative Power, but are intermediary instruments of the evolutionary Process. We must seek for the original Power above Life and Mind.

This greater Consciousness is a supramental Consciousness-Force, a power of the Spirit. The creative energy of Mind and Life are instrumental and partial; Mind and Life modify the material substance but do not transform it. The full emergence of the law of the spirit can only come through the power of supermind which shall change the mental into the supramental being. This is the stage in the evolution which decisively changes the nature of the evolution by transforming the Ignorance and its basis of Inconscience.

This progressive self-manifestation of the Spirit in a material universe proceeds by an awakening of the involved consciousness and force and its ascent from grade to grade. The law of action of each grade is determined partly also by the material organisation. Thus mind as we experience it is diminished by

an enveloping nescience. It is only fully evolved by the awakening of the supermind in the embodied mental being and nature.

There is an appropriate class of existences for each grade of the evolving Consciousness; material forms, vegetable life, animals, primitive man, developed humans, and more evolved spiritual beings. Each new advance takes up what was before. The animal takes into himself living and inanimate Matter, and man takes up both along with the animal existence. There is a continuity of the evolution; the Consciousness passes from one grade to another either imperceptibly or by some crisis or some descent from a higher place. The indwelling consciousness thus makes its way from lower to higher gradation. On the basis of material forms living beings are able to manifest, and in the same way mental beings can manifest supramental beings in a material world. Man is thus a transitional being; there are still unevolved powers of being to appear. The past has seen a slow subconscious working; the present sees the emergence of human intelligence, a half-conscious stage; the future must be increasingly conscious until the gnostic principle emerges.

Science has shown the evolution of material forms from the inanimate to the more organised living and finally thinking beings. But very little has been said of the evolution of Consciousness. We can see no link for instance between the submental life and the mind of intelligence. In spite of these missing links science believes in the continuity of the evolution; but the inner evolution remains a mystery.

The deepest gulfs appear between inanimate matter and living creatures, also between plant life and the lowest animal which manifests a rudimentary movement of mind. The gulf between the highest animal and man—between the sense-mind and the intellect—is still deeper, though narrower. We can no longer believe in ready-made species appearing, created by God. There must be an inner force at work which will give us the key to these abrupt transitions.

From the point of view of consciousness we see that the

mental is fixed in the inconscient principle of matter. The plant, on the other hand, is fixed in the subconscient action of the life principle. Man and animal are both mentally conscious beings; the animal in the vital and sense-mind, and man in the intellect which is a reflection or deformation of a higher consciousness. We see that in each part of these forms of existence the universal action of consciousness has fixed its action of consciousness in a different principle. Here we see the sharp lines that make a radical difference between being and being in their nature.

This successive ascent does not mean, however, the abandonment of the lower grades. If the rudiments of the higher are present in the lower, then the lower characters taken up into the higher being constitutes an evolutionary process. A point must be reached where the lower gradation can manifest the higher, and at this point a pressure from a superior plane where the new power is dominant may assist in a decisive transition by a bound—perhaps following an imperceptible occult action. This appears to be Nature's way of transition from lower to higher grades of consciousness.

Life, mind and supermind are in fact present in the atom, but they are there latent in an unconscious action of the Energy. Thus each material object, though in outer form its consciousness is wholly absorbed, has within it a secretly governing consciousness. In the plant, although the outer consciousness is still asleep, yet the concealed conscious being has been intensified to develop a new principle of action, a life-force. This life-force expresses itself in motion, vibration and transformation of energy by contact, all of which inanimate matter is incapable of.

Conscious life in the animal is a great intensification which develops a new principle—mentality. Animal being can receive a wider range of contacts and can turn them into sense and vital-mind values. It has conscious sensations, memories, impulses and emotions. It has even a practical intelligence—cunning and invention—founded on memory, association and observation. It prepares the way for human intelligence.

In man the consciousness is more outward; the world begins to be revealed to him. While the higher animal has only a limited waking mind necessary for its vital existence, in man the conscious mentality appears more fully on the surface; and there is transition from the vital mind to the reflecting and thinking mind with the higher powers of invention and observation, and a force of imagination and aesthetic creation. Reason and self detaching intelligence develop. Also mind takes up the lower grades and gives intelligence values to their action; he takes up the mental life of animal as well as the material and bodily. Whereas the animal thinks in an automatic way, in man there is the ideative and reflective faculty. Man becomes the skilled craftsman, the artist and the adept.

With the eye of his inner being man can look upon what is below him in the evolution, and he can understand the lower life from this higher consciousness and he can also raise it to a higher level. He aims to surcharge the lower life with a deeper significance and in the end he must gain the consent of the lower to admit the higher values. This in fact is the inmost aim of ethics, to purify and prepare the vital and physical and lower mental life fit to be transformed into the higher mental and supramental life. Ascent with the accompanying integration is the intention in Nature.

This action of carrying the lower upwards is the way from the beginning. The plant represents a vital-physical intensity, a mute though intense life-vibration in it. The animal takes up this vital and physical existence and infuses it with an intense sense-emotion. Man adopts a higher intensity from his standpoint of will and intelligence, in order to get out of life higher values of the aesthetic, moral and practical. He mentalises the animal reactions, and demands a transformation of his lower nature.

Man also turns his gaze upwards and inwards, and it is man who first makes this upward gaze consciously. Man begins to be a developing conscious soul, striving to be master of the mechani-

cal energies of Nature. And although the spirit within him wishes to rise to greater heights, yet he cannot do so without cutting himself off from Nature. But his natural impulse is to transform his lower Nature and not reject it. Only in this way can he perfect his mental nature and bring in the higher principles of soul and supermind into active being. It is in human nature to exceed itself by conscious evolution,—not only the individual but the collectivity also strives towards a superior humanity,—even a divine manhood.

There are successive grades or planes of mind, and within each grade there is a series. The lowest sub-plane of the intelligence is the physical-mental which is dependent on sense and the brain activity. There is little of the subjective or inner experience open to it. Next there is a vital intelligence of instinct and impulse which supports sensations, desires, hopes and feelings. Then there is the mental intelligence which is mainly traditional, practical and objective. The physical mind, even if it accepts the higher realities of life above the sense-experience, cannot feel them yet concretely, but only as a subjective extension of the physical realities. But this stand on the material existence, his external outlook, is but the first phase in man's development. It is only the basis of mind-development in the material world.

Above the physical mind is the intelligence of the life-mind which is open to the formation of a life-soul. The life-soul seeks the fulfilment of the life-being and the vital nature; it supports the urge of ambition, power, love and adventure, and all kinds of new life-experience. There is a secret subliminal vital being behind this life mentality. This inner life-mind is not limited by the physical senses, and is open to a life-world behind the material universe. The vital man is the man of sensation and desire, action and passion. He gives the material existence a push for life-experience and life-expansion, eventually the seeker of new horizons. Although his mental life is often enslaved by the vital force and its desires, he can become the mental adven-

turer, opening the way to new mind-formation or ideas or creative activities. The vital mind is thus a great force in the evolution.

Above the life mentality is the mind-plane of pure thought and intelligence to which the things of the mental world are the most important realities,—philosophy, thought, science, ideas and ideals. But the life part of this mental man often weighs down this nobler mental element; only in his greatest development are the vital and physical controlled by the thinking will and intelligence. The mental man cannot, however, transform his nature; he can only control and harmonise it, sublimating and refining it.

Behind the pure intelligence is the subliminal mind which is open to the world of mental forces. These are influences which act on the material world and life plane, but which we cannot at present directly experience. But we can consciously live in this inner plane of mind which can become entirely real to us. To be an intelligence is the highest position in the hierarchy of Nature. He is less a man of action than the vital man, but he can open new vistas to the human race. But these degrees of mentality—the physical, vital and pure mental—are most often mixed in us. They are in fact the steps of Nature's evolution towards its eventual self-exceeding.

To go beyond our present surface mentality we must dive inwards and bring out the secret soul, or we must ascend to the planes of intuitive consciousness above our present mental level. Here we can reach the spiritual mind and be in direct contact with the highest reality of things, Sachchidananda. We have also to open up our inner being, the soul, inner mind and inner life-part behind our surface being. By breaking these two boundaries, the higher and the inner, we can rise to a greater consciousness and the spiritual powers can enter into nature. Man has to evolve to the spiritual being, beyond the thinker, sage and self-disciplined mental being. The spiritual seer, yogin and mystic are the fore-runners of this higher evolution.

Man must go beyond the present surface being in order

to reach a new evolutionary level. The vital mental man can only act within the present limits of the evolution. Any attempt by themselves to heighten their level of consciousness only results in an exaggeration of the present human nature; it does not transform or divinise man. Only by making the inner being the ruler of our life, or opening to the spiritual planes, can we transmute our nature.

The evolution of the spiritual man differs from the past in two respects. Firstly it is conducted by a conscious effort of the human mind, the attempt to break the walls of the ignorance and extend inwards, and outwards as well as upwards. Nature has up to now only enlarged the bounds of our surface Knowledge-Ignorance. The spiritual endeavour is to discover the soul, and become united in consciousness with God and all existence. It is the first step towards a radical transformation of the Ignorance into Knowledge. It marks the influence of the inner being, and higher spiritual mind on our surface acting being, and is thus the first approach of mind to spirit, not yet able to make the radical change.

Instead of merely receiving influences we must live deeper within, and raise ourselves to higher and wider levels of consciousness, in order to create a new principle, widen our life and transform the lower grades of existence. Each step must lead to a larger and more divine being. Religion, occult knowledge, yoga and psychic experience are directions on the road of the self-unfolding spirit.

But there is the yet unconquered earth-matter which dominates and weighs down the spiritual effort. This has resulted in an enormous intellectual and spiritual conservation, to change present habits and traditions. The effort is in the hands of only a few individuals, the remainder are in doubt or in indifference. This downward pull, however, cannot be persistent. There must be the upward call and ascent which from past endeavours are stored in the subconscious mind of humanity. There must at least be the more general admission of this transformation into

spiritual being, and the more widespread and conscious concentration on it. The change is for humanity and not for a few initiated individuals.

The foundation of the evolution is Matter, and the ascent is that of Nature. At first the integration is through our unconscious or half-conscious change by Nature herself. But when the conscious being begins to take action, a change in the process is inevitable. The foundation can now no longer be Matter, but the spiritual status above or the soul status within. Light and knowledge must flow from above and be received within. Our higher and inner being will then replace the outer, surface being which will become the annexe through which the true being meets the universe. In this way the outer world itself will become inward to the spiritual awareness, responding to the direct contact of consciousness with consciousness. The inconscient foundation will then be made conscious by the inflow of light and awareness from above, and an integral consciousness will become the basis of a harmonisation of life through transformation, unification and integration.

N. PEARSON

REVIEWS

(1)

Bharati in English Verse *By S. Prema.* P. 110 Cr. Price Rs. 2/- Pub. Porunai Publishers, 91 Kutchery Rd., Madras 4.

Prema's rendering of forty-one select pieces from Bharati is a very welcome addition to the growing number of English translations of the poet's works. True, the sweetness and the exaltation that the originals breathe in Tamil could hardly be expected in the translations. The sound effect characteristic of the language and the harmony arising from the creator's soul transmitted through that sound can rarely be seized in another tongue with a totally different genius. Yet, reading through the elegant renderings before us, we do seem to hear the happy echoes of the originals from afar.

The promising translator, S. Prema, has done well in giving a sufficiently detailed account of the life of the poet in her Introduction. It helps the reader to trace the source of the poet's inspiration, to get acquainted with that aspect of his life which has not received adequate attention so far. We propose to confine ourselves, at the moment, to this part of the book.

For the first time in Bharatiana, we find here delineated—though in light touches—the true character of the relation that existed between Sri Aurobindo and Bharati. Says the author : "Sri Aurobindo and Bharati engaged in Vedic studies and Bharati too learned to see India—as Sri Aurobindo had seen Her—verily as the Mother and to sing her praises. (P. 3). Also, "Sri Aurobindo was even more—a spell binder, an inspiration, a veritable Krishna to this neophyte Arjuna." (P. 14). She continues : "Sri Aurobindo turned Bharati's mind to the Vedas...and initiated him into the truth of things".

The present reviewer, then in his teens, had the good fortune to be present in Sri Aurobindo's house during those years (1914 onwards) when these Vedic studies were in progress. Bharati who admired and revered Sri Aurobindo—(Bharati in fact received initiation in Yoga from Sri Aurobindo and followed the sadhana till the middle of 1917 when there came a break), used to listen with rapt attention to Sri Aurobindo's comments on Sayana and Shankara but in uneasy silence; for Sayana's interpretation of the Vedas as all Karmakanda and Shankara's characterisation of the world as an illusion used to receive a none-too-kindly treatment at Sri Aurobindo's hands. Bharati fidgetted. He complained to his intimate friends that Sri Aurobindo demolished, without caring in the least, the very foundations of Hindu Culture, exclaiming, 'What remains of Hinduism if Sayana and Shankara are given the go-by ?' And it was the self-same Bharati who, a few months later, was preaching with vehemence Sri Aurobindo's ideas on the Vedas, on Mayavada, Karma, Rebirth etc. This was the result of a few months' close and intense study of the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita under Sri Aurobindo. Bharati's introduction to the Bhagavat Gita in Tamil stands as a testimony to this fact.

A New Dawn, a New Age, a New World and a New Light and Power to new-shape the life of men on earth, are the divine gifts brought by Sri Aurobindo to humanity and Bharati had the rare privilege of witnessing, even assisting in his own way, the birth of the New Era.

Bharati's source of inspiration was from this afflatus of Knowledge and Power that ushered in a fresh Age. He recited and sang all his songs and poems—almost all of them—each as it rose from his soul, to Sri Aurobindo before releasing them to the public. Times without number Bharati could be seen coming out of Sri Aurobindo's room, his face beaming with a heavenly glow.

The author remarks in one place : "Aurobindonian evocation of Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati in *The Mother* may be compared with Bharati's own *Three Loves* in which he describes one by one his frenzied adoration of

Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali." We may point out that Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati in Sri Aurobindo's Thought and Vision, are quite different from the traditional Ishwari, Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Few could have experienced a more intense and sweet thrill, a greater charge of emotion than the present writer when he heard—not once but several times—Bharati singing those 'Three Loves'. The effect these songs left on one was one of freshness as if all the mundane impurities were washed away leaving only celestial echoes. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, reaches you to your deepest parts and touches the divinity in you and you settle in the faith that the earth is surely going to be transformed into a heaven by these Manifestations of the Adya Shakti.

Bharati was something extraordinary; he was not merely a genius but one who was sent from above with a purpose—a divine messenger to Tamil Nad. His true being kept a close touch with its place of origin but always felt thwarted in this world abounding in human frailties and crudities. He met with innumerable disappointments but to the surprise of every one, friend or foe, Bharati did not change his ways because of these reverses. He was ever on his legs, against all odds, to fashion the life of his countrymen in the likeness of his vision.

Bharati gave to the Tamil tongue what it had not known and uttered before. He gave voice to what the modern Tamil mind was struggling to express. Its mute emotions, voiceless feelings found speech in him. Each one in Tamil Nad finds in Bharati a channel for his own heart's cry, a light for the sombre chambers of his mind, a spearhead for his inner impulsions. Take any poem of his, it is Tamil to its very core, profoundly Indian in spirit and yet dynamically fresh. His is a muse that releases the reader into dimensions totally new. These English renderings do capture something of this spirit of Bharati's poems :

Fear not, my heart ! Victory is sure !
Freedom shall be ours, here and now !

The mighty Mother lodges in my heart,

.....

High are the shoulders, mountain-like,
And they carry the Mother's golden feet;

.....

Rowing across this sea of storms
With the boat of the Mother's grace,
Let us get ashore, turn back on Pain,
And reach the Mother's feet.

Or, the prophetic lines :

This is what Lord Krishna said :
'I live in all living things'.
Bharat will show the world the way
Of all attaining the Life Divine.

AMRITA

(2)

Lord Mahavira—His life and doctrines : *By Purnachand Samsookha.* Published by the Secretary Jaina Swetamber Terapanthi Mahasabha, 3 Portuguese Church Street, Calcutta 1. Second Edition Pages 108, Price Rs. 2.

Jainism is one of the oldest systems of religion in India. In fact, it is more a sytem of religion than a system of philosophy, although the epistemological and ontological background of Jainism are there. It flourished before the birth of Buddhism and before the coming of Vardhamana Mahavira, there were a many as twenty three Tirthankars or Enlightened Ones who founded the religion in unknown antiquity. These Tirthankaras belonged to the Kshatriya caste and yet surprisingly enough they taught, age after age, the philosophy of non-violence or Ahimsa. The seed of the moral philosophy of Jainism lies in the single

sentence of the Sutra Kritanga that by harming no creature a man reaches the Great Peace of Enlightenment. Great stress is indeed laid upon the virtue of Ahimsa and all other virtues like *satya*, *aparigraha* and *brahmacarya* are made to follow from it. As a religo-ethical system Jainism reached a very high degree of perfection and the spiritual discipline it provided for the seekers was very severe, and painful.

Vardhamana Mahavira was the last of the twenty four Tirthankars while Rishabhadeva was the first. That which goes today in the name of Jainism is practically the teachings of Lord Mahavira or those of his disciples.

Here is an excellent little biography of the last great prophet of Jainism, Mahavira. The author Sri Purnachand Samsookha has taken great pains to bring out an authentic and inspiring version of the life of Lord Mahavira, in a language and style most suited for that purpose. Mahavira, was an elder contemporary of Buddha and was the great exponent of the cult of non-violence or Ahimsa. His life and mission, and the arduous path he followed in quest of the spirit are truly inspiring and illuminating. One gets wonder-struck at the most severe austerities and vows of fasting the prophet undertook for the attainment of Kevalihood, or Omniscient prophethood. The author seems to have taken special care in narrating many interesting anecdotes and incidents in the life of Mahavira as a wandering monk or Shramana. What is remarkable with the book is that it is full of a kind of deep and profound religious fervour and enthusiasm. While one looks through the pages one feels an atmosphere of serenity, sweetness and devotion. The attainment of the prophethood of the Lord evokes great emotions in the author and he writes "Mahavira passed more than twelve long years in illumining and perfuming his soul with an unexampled knowledge, matchless vision, unparalleled conduct, simplicity, forbearance, forgiveness and askesis. In the thirteenth year of his yogic life, in course of his wanderings through the outskirts of the village called Jambhira, situated on the bank of the river Rijuvaluka,...on the tenth day of

the bright fortnight of the month of Vaishakha...at the foot of a Sal tree, and in the state of a two-day fast (not even water was drunk during this fast) and deep meditation, Mahavir attained Kevalajnana, the absolute knowledge. The trumpets of the gods sounded in heavens." Then the Shramana Mahavira became Shat, Jina, Kevali, all knowing, all seeing..." (Kalpa Sutras) (pages 21-22).

The last two chapters of the book deal with the doctrines and sayings of Mahavira. It is here that one gets in a nutshell a general outline of the Jain philosophy and ethics. Some of the sayings of Mahavira are truly illuminating and worth recalling. On Ahimsa or the cult of non-violence he says.

"O man, he whom you wish to beat, he whom you wish to subdue, he to whom you wish to cause grief or pain, or whom you wish to kill, is no other than your own self, that is to say, he feels pleasure and pain even as you do. An unsophisticated and enlightened man must remember this truth and refrain from killing or causing the death of any being." (p. 52)

Human birth is considered to be very precious and Mahavira advises everybody to take advantage of it. "O man, reflect and attain knowledge. It is extremely difficult to have human birth. The time that passes never returns. Death surprises us at any time, in our childhood, in our old age, or even when we are in the mother's womb. The hawk swoops suddenly upon the partridge. Therefore make every effort to attain true knowledge before it is too late..." (p. 53).

The last but one chapter of the book deals with the nine cardinal categories of Jainism, the Jiva, A-Jiva (matter), Asrava, (influx of karma), Vandha (bondage), Samvara (arrest of the influx of karma), Nirjara (shedding off of karma), Papa (sin), Punya (virtue), and Moksha (liberation) and the three fundamental ethical principles, Right faith, Right knowledge and Right conduct. The doctrine of Syadvada or the doctrine of 'may be' with

its Saptabhangi Nyaya or sevenfold judgments is also well explained. The author has very lucidly and clearly discussed the different aspects of each of the doctrines and therefore deserves our praise. The parables given at the end are also a pleasing feature of the book. We commend the book to the general public and in particular to students to go through it to have a clear idea of Jainism. The get-up and printing of the book are praiseworthy and the design on the cover page—a facsimile of an old design taken from a Jaina manuscript—is very fine and attractive.

K. C. PATI